

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 AID-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
OMB-01 PM-04 L-03 H-01 /056 W
----- 077727 /15

R 210845Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7404
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMCONSUL SONGKHLA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 34207

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SREF, SN, TH, VS
SUBJ: PLANS OF ASIAN RELIGION AND PEACE ASSOCIATION TO RESCUE
BOAT REFUGEES

REF: (A) SINGAPORE 5437 (B) SINGAPORE 5456 (C) STATE 305830

SUMMARY: VISITS TO THAILAND FROM SINGAPORE OF SEVERAL PERSONS
ATTACHED TO ORGANIZATION INTENDING TO PICK UP BOAT REFUGEES AT
SEA HAVE RAISED SOME QUESTIONS AS TO GROUP'S BONA FIDES AND
SENSE OF REALITY. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING THE LATTER PART OF LAST WEEK, PERSONS REPRESENTING THE
ASIAN RELIGION AND PEACE ASSOCIATION (MRS. LUKE FOGGARTY, MS.
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MARY JO WARREN, AND MRS. LE THI CHAM BATTRICK) VISITED THE TWO
VIETNAMESE BOAT CAMPS AT LAEM SING AND SONGKHLA. AS ADDRESSEES
RECALL, THIS ORGANIZATION IS INTENDING TO OBTAIN A SHIP AND
BOAT(S) TO PICK UP AND TRANSPORT TO AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION
REFUGEES ESCAPING VIET-NAM BY BOAT (REFS A AND B).

2. ALTHOUGH THEIR PROJECT MAY BE LAUDABLE ONE, WE CANNOT HELP BUT WONDER SOMEWHAT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION. ITS THREE REPRESENTATIVES WERE NOT CONSISTENT IN WHAT THEY TOLD REFUGEES AND OTHERS ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES AND RAISED SUSPICIONS WHEN THEY REQUESTED ADDRESSES OF RELATIVES IN THE U.S. THEIR PLANS ABOUT WHAT TO DO WITH REFUGEES PICKED UP SEEMED UNCERTAIN: E.G., ANCHOR OFF COAST OF SINGAPORE AND WAIT UNTIL PAPERWORK IS COMPLETED TO PROCESS REFUGEES THROUGH THAT COUNTRY TO ONWARD DESTINATION OR UNLOAD THEM IN SOME THIRD COUNTRY.

3. WHAT CAUSED GREATEST SUSPICION AMONG VIETNAMESE REFUGEES LAST WEEKEND WAS FACT THAT ORGANIZATION IS HEADED BY THICH NHAT HANH, A LONG-TIME ANTI-GVN MONK WHO WAS OFTEN THOUGHT TO BE WORKING HAND IN GLOVE WITH THE COMMUNISTS. FACT THAT HE IS INVOLVED LEADS SOME REFUGEES TO SPECULATE WILDLY THAT ORGANIZATION'S INTENTION IS TO PICK UP NEW REFUGEES AT SEA AND RETURN THEM TO VIET-NAM. OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE UNDERTAKING ARE REPORTEDLY DANIEL ELLSBERG AND DANIEL BERRIGAN. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITY HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH ALLEGED DIS-ENCHANTMENT OF SOME AMERICANS, INCLUDING THE LATTER, WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING IN VIET-NAM, ACCORDING TO WASHINGTON STAR REPORT CITED REF C.

4. WE UNDERSTAND ORGANIZATION IS THINKING OF BASING THE BOAT TO PICK UP REFUGEES AT THAILAND'S KOH KUT ISLAND IN GULF OF THAILAND. ISLAND'S PROXIMITY TO CAMBODIA AND CAMBODIAN WATERS, SITE OF PERENNIAL CLASHES BETWEEN THAI FISHERMEN AND KC, IS POSSIBLE CAUSE FOR CONCERN, AS WELL.

5. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION SINGAPORE
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CAN OBTAIN, AS AVAILABLE, ABOUT ORGANIZATION'S INTENTIONS. ITS REPORTED FINANCING, AS WELL AS ACTIVITY DEMONSTRATED BY ITS THREE REPRESENTATIVES IN THAILAND LAST WEEK, WOULD INDICATE THAT IT SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.
WHITEHOUSE

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